

HOUSE BILL 1018

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5lr1834

By: **Delegates Hixson, Gutierrez, C. Howard, A. Miller, Rosenberg, and Turner**

Introduced and read first time: February 13, 2015

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Early Voting Centers and Polling Places – Waiting Times to Vote**

3 FOR the purpose of stating the intent of the General Assembly that no voter should have
4 to wait more than a certain period of time to vote at an early voting center or polling
5 place; stating the intent of the General Assembly that the State Board of Elections
6 and local boards of elections take every possible action to ensure that voters casting
7 ballots at early voting centers and polling places are able to complete the entire
8 voting process within a certain period of time; requiring the State Board to adopt a
9 comprehensive plan to accomplish the goal that all voters at early voting centers and
10 polling places be able to vote within a certain period of time; requiring the
11 comprehensive plan to be adopted on or before a certain date and include certain
12 elements; requiring the State Board to submit the comprehensive plan to certain
13 committees of the General Assembly on or before a certain date; requiring the State
14 Board to analyze certain data, make the data available to the public, and submit a
15 summary report of the data to certain committees of the General Assembly on or
16 before certain dates; requiring the State Board to utilize certain data to revise the
17 comprehensive plan, issue an updated plan, and submit the updated plan to certain
18 committees of the General Assembly on or before certain dates; and generally
19 relating to waiting times to vote at early voting centers and polling places.

20 BY adding to

21 Article – Election Law

22 Section 10–310.1

23 Annotated Code of Maryland

24 (2010 Replacement Volume and 2014 Supplement)

25 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

26 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

27 **Article – Election Law**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **10-310.1.**

2 (A) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT:

3 (1) NO VOTER SHOULD HAVE TO WAIT MORE THAN 30 MINUTES TO
4 VOTE AT AN EARLY VOTING CENTER OR POLLING PLACE; AND

5 (2) THE STATE BOARD AND LOCAL BOARDS TAKE EVERY POSSIBLE
6 ACTION TO ENSURE THAT VOTERS CASTING BALLOTS AT EARLY VOTING CENTERS
7 AND POLLING PLACES ARE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE ENTIRE VOTING PROCESS,
8 FROM ARRIVAL TO DEPARTURE, WITHIN 30 MINUTES.

9 (B) TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL IN SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, THE
10 STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1,
11 2016, THAT SHALL INCLUDE AT LEAST THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

12 (1) A SYSTEM TO COLLECT DATA RELATING TO:

13 (I) ACTUAL VOTER WAIT TIMES AT REGULAR INTERVALS
14 THROUGHOUT EACH VOTING DAY AT:

15 1. EACH EARLY VOTING CENTER; AND

16 2. POLLING PLACES WITH A HISTORY OF EXCESSIVE
17 WAIT TIMES, SELECTED BY THE STATE BOARD; AND

18 (II) FACTORS THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO EXCESSIVE WAIT
19 TIMES;

20 (2) A SYSTEM TO PROVIDE UP-TO-THE-MINUTE INFORMATION TO
21 THE PUBLIC ON THE INTERNET CONCERNING VOTER WAIT TIMES AT:

22 (I) EACH EARLY VOTING CENTER; AND

23 (II) POLLING PLACES WITH A HISTORY OF EXCESSIVE WAIT
24 TIMES, SELECTED BY THE STATE BOARD;

25 (3) EVALUATION OF THE LAYOUT OF POLLING PLACES TO MAXIMIZE
26 EFFICIENCY AND MINIMIZE WAIT TIMES;

27 (4) ESTIMATION OF VOTER TURNOUT FOR AN ELECTION, INCLUDING
28 THE TIMES AND LOCATIONS THAT VOTERS ARE LIKELY TO VOTE;

1 **(5) TESTING OF THE LENGTH OF TIME IT TAKES A VOTER TO VOTE THE**
2 **BALLOT THAT WILL BE USED IN AN ELECTION;**

3 **(6) USE OF ELECTION JUDGES TO:**

4 **(I) GREET VOTERS AS THE VOTERS ARRIVE AT AN EARLY**
5 **VOTING CENTER OR POLLING PLACE AND PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DIRECTION OR**
6 **ASSISTANCE TO THE VOTERS; AND**

7 **(II) COLLECT DATA ON THE NUMBER OF POTENTIAL VOTERS**
8 **WHO LEAVE AN EARLY VOTING CENTER OR ELECTION DAY POLLING PLACE WITHOUT**
9 **VOTING BECAUSE THE WAIT TIME IS TOO LONG;**

10 **(7) APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR VOTERS WITH**
11 **DISABILITIES, INCLUDING ALLOWING A VOTER WITH A DISABILITY TO MOVE TO THE**
12 **FRONT OF ANY WAITING LINE AT THE REQUEST OF THE VOTER; AND**

13 **(8) VOTER EDUCATION TO INCREASE VOTER PREPAREDNESS AND**
14 **REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUAL VOTERS TO VOTE.**

15 **(C) THE STATE BOARD SHALL SUBMIT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
16 **REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2016,**
17 **TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**
18 **COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS IN ACCORDANCE**
19 **WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.**

20 **(D) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ANALYZE THE DATA COLLECTED UNDER**
21 **SUBSECTION (B)(1) OF THIS SECTION AND ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 15 OF EACH**
22 **YEAR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING A REGULARLY SCHEDULED GENERAL ELECTION:**

23 **(1) MAKE THE DATA AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ON THE STATE**
24 **BOARD'S WEB SITE; AND**

25 **(2) SUBMIT A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE DATA TO THE SENATE**
26 **EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE**
27 **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF THE**
28 **STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.**

29 **(E) THE STATE BOARD SHALL:**

30 **(1) UTILIZE THE DATA COLLECTED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1) OF**
31 **THIS SECTION TO REVISE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER**
32 **SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION;**

1 **(2) ISSUE AN UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ON OR BEFORE JULY**
2 **1 OF EACH YEAR IN WHICH A REGULARLY SCHEDULED GENERAL ELECTION IS HELD;**
3 **AND**

4 **(3) SUBMIT THE UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ON OR BEFORE**
5 **JULY 1 OF EACH YEAR IN WHICH A REGULARLY SCHEDULED GENERAL ELECTION IS**
6 **HELD TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**
7 **COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS IN ACCORDANCE**
8 **WITH § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE.**

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
10 1, 2015.